

Haig Likely Choice for NATO Post

Washington

General Alexander M. Haig Jr., chief of the White House staff, is expected to be appointed supreme commander of NATO and head of United States Forces in Europe by President Ford, two authoritative administrative administration officials said yesterday.

To take the post Haig will be recalled to active duty as a four-star Army general, a status from which he retired in August, 1973, three months after he replaced H. R. Haldeman as President Nixon's aide, the officials said.

The White House said through a spokesman that it could not comment on the report.

Another high administration official said that Mr. Ford is exploring several options concerning Haig and that he wants him to stay on for awhile. This official said that the decision is not imminent. But the NATO post is the most likely one for Haig, he added.

Haig, who will be 50 years

Back Page Col. 1

GEN. HAIG

From Page 1

old in December, would succeed General Andrew J. Goodpaster, 59. The commander has the double function of overseeing the 15-member Atlantic defense community and the more than 300,000 U.S. servicemen stationed in Europe.

The officials who disclosed Mr. Ford's intention to shift Haig said that they did not know when an official White House announcement would be made or even why the move was being contemplated.

Nor was it possible to learn immediately what factors determined the expected shift: whether it was Mr. Ford's wish to reshape the White House operation by eliminating the major holdovers from the Nixon administration or Haig's wish to return to a purely military job.

In any case, the NATO post would provide a comfortable way for Mr. Ford to respond to some demands that Haig, who was so intimately associated with Mr. Nixon during the last 15 months of the Watergate

scandal, be removed from the White House.

On August 14, only five days after he was sworn in, Mr. Ford said through his press secretary, Jerald F. terHorst, that he had asked Haig to stay as chief of the White House staff "for the duration," and terHorst added that Mr. Ford had requested Haig to remain "indefinitely."

In 1969, Haig joined the Nixon administration as military adviser to Henry A. Kissinger, who was then assistant to the President for national security affairs. Two years later, Haig was appointed vice chief of staff of the Army. He held that post until his current White House appointment on May 4, 1973.

If he accepts the new appointment, Haig would take a pay cut. His White House position pays him \$42,500 a year, while the NATO chief gets the base pay for a full general — \$36,000. But the supreme commander receives generous allowances and quarters from the organization.

New York Times



GENERAL HAIG
Ford staff chief